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FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8869
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 6582
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 6890
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 2189
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 4930
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 6149
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2550
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 0178
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 4265
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2119
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 3267
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 000813

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: NEPAL: PRESIDENT EXPECTED TO BE SWORN IN ON JULY
20; NO DATE YET FOR NEW GOVERNMENT

REF: KATHMANDU 808

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Randy W. Berry. Reasons 1.4 (b/d)

Presidential Swearing-in Likely on July 20

¶1. (C) According to Manohar Bhattarai, the Acting Secretary General of the Constituent Assembly (CA), Nepal's first President is expected to be sworn in at the National Academy in Kathmandu on July 20. An official in the Chief Secretary's office told Emboff July 18 that the ceremony, which will also be for the Vice President, was tentatively scheduled for 3 p.m. local time. The Foreign Ministry is tasked with inviting diplomatic missions, but is holding off until after the election takes place on July 19. At close of business on July 18, the Maoist nominee, Ram Raja Prasad Singh, was still the favorite (reftel). If Singh garners the support of all of the Maoist Members of Parliament (MPs) as well as those of the three major Madhesi parties, he will have 308 votes. Since there are only 594 MPs at present in the CA, Singh needs only 298 votes for a simple majority.

Vice President Hard To Predict

¶2. (C) Embassy sources are hard-pressed to predict who will be Vice President. It is generally assumed each of the four parties which nominated candidates will support their party candidate in the first round. The Madhesi People's Rights Forum's candidate is considered the least likely winner. Only the top two candidates will advance to the second round. Bhattarai indicated July 18 that the election of the President and Vice President will take place simultaneously.

No Date Yet for New Government

¶3. (C) Indian Political Counselor Shambu Kumaran informed Emboff July 18 that he thought Prime Minister G.P. Koirala would be under tremendous pressure to tender his resignation to the President immediately after the President is sworn in. The President would then, following tradition, request Maoist chairman Pushpa Dahal (aka Prachanda), as the head of the largest party, to form a new government. Dahal would not take office, however, until he was elected by the Assembly

and sworn in by the President. (Note: The Interim Constitution provides that the Prime Minister is to be elected by simple majority if no consensus candidate can be found. End note.) Koirala would be a caretaker Prime Minister until the new PM was sworn in. Comment: How soon this will all happen is anybody's guess.
BERRY